

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90

We have broadband deserts in this country. We have places where networks do not reach and where digital opportunity is hard to find. Many of these locations are rural. But not all. The realities of redlining and harsh economics of service have put some populated places out of reach, too.

The unfortunate truth is that the Federal Communications Commission does not know with precision where these broadband deserts are, who is affected, and how well our policies work to bring connectivity to communities that have been left behind. Our broadband maps are woefully inadequate. They overstate coverage in too many areas and understate it in others. Fixing this problem is not for the faint of heart. But we will never manage the problems we do not measure. So I think this agency needs to repair our maps and improve the data we use to make decisions.

This is not the subject of our effort today. But it hovers in the background. Because here we transition universal service funds available for broadband support from existing providers to new winners in the Connect America Fund auction. In practice, we kick off a process that will result in awarding nearly \$1.5 billion over 10 years for broadband efforts in over 700,000 locations. The details are complex, but to the credit of the Wireline Competition Bureau, they are thoughtfully presented. So I support this decision today.

However, going forward we have a challenge. We cannot hand out these billions and just wait for broadband deserts to miraculously support digital life. We need to check. In other words, we need to audit where these dollars go, what commitments were made, and where deployment takes place. We need to map what was spent and where service resulted.

There are too many communities across this country thirsty for better broadband. I am hopeful that with tools like the one we use here, we can address these broadband deserts. But we need to be mindful that we will only do so effectively if we have accurate data that informs our work. And on that score, we have work to do.